



STATE OF MICHIGAN
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
LANSING

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

BRIAN CALLEY
LT. GOVERNOR

April 25, 2017

Dear Colleagues:

We have worked together over the last six years to produce balanced and on-time budgets that serve all citizens of Michigan. As we continue our work on our seventh budget, we must fulfill our commitment to deliver a fiscally-sound budget, but also make sure that our budget puts people first, especially our most vulnerable populations.

The House and Senate DHHS subcommittee budgets reflected differences in several of my priority areas including mental health, health services, and physical health. I look forward to working with the Legislature to prioritize this funding during the budget process.

Mental Health and Wellness Commission Programming:

- I chaired the Mental Health and Wellness Commission, which offered 60 recommendations to help Michiganders living with mental health issues achieve greater quality of life, safety, and independence. These recommendations supported the growth of *Project SEARCH*, an internship program for students with disabilities, helping them learn the skills needed to gain competitive employment. The recommendations also supported *Special Olympics' Project Unify*, which is helping create more inclusive school environments. Programs like this are essential, because more than 60 percent of students with developmental disabilities report being bullied. These are just two of the many initiatives funded by the *Mental Health and Wellness Programming* funds.

Direct Care Worker Wage Increase:

- *Direct Care Workers* help improve the lives of our most vulnerable citizens every day. In order for us to keep and attract qualified individuals, we must provide direct care workers with competitive wages. I support an increase of .50/hour for these compassionate caretakers and encourage lawmakers to do so as well.

Autism Funding:

- Autism treatment in Michigan has come a long way since I signed Autism Insurance Reform in 2012, helping people live more independent, self-determined lives.
- *University Autism Funding* is critical to train future autism behavioral therapists who will go on to provide this essential therapy, as well as healthcare professionals to help diagnose and effectively treat youth and adults with autism. Though we have come a long way in increasing the number of therapists in Michigan, there is still a waiting list and we need to be sure we are supporting our universities in continuing to grow their programs.
- The *Autism Services/Autism Fee Schedule Increase* supports the identification of autism in children on Medicaid and provides applied behavior analysis to help youth reach their full potential.
- The *Autism Navigator* is a critical tool which helps connect more people to available help. The Autism Alliance of Michigan runs the Navigator, providing access to resources

and support for families navigating the difficulties of finding the right treatment and services for their loved ones.

The Child Lead Poisoning Elimination Board:

- The *Child Lead Poisoning Elimination Board* set forth more than 100 recommendations to eliminate child lead exposure throughout the state in 2016, focused on being proactive to make environments safer, preventing lead exposure before it occurs. A permanent commission was recently created and we are eager to begin work on implementation of the recommendations to make Michigan a lead-free state for our children. This funding is essential to beginning this work to keep our children safe from lead exposure.

Centers for Independent Living:

- *Centers for Independent Living* help people with disabilities across the state live self-sufficient lives, and work to ensure that communities are accessible for everyone. This funding in the previous budget was being used in conjunction with Michigan Rehabilitation Services to gain federal matching funds and increase efforts to train, place, and support Michiganders with disabilities who deserve the chance to have competitive careers. As such, I strongly encourage inclusion of this funding in the budget.

All of these initiatives help improve the lives of Michiganders and deserve support in the final version of this year's budget. I look forward to working with the Legislature throughout the budget process to prioritize these initiatives. Please feel free to contact my office should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Calley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian Calley
Lt. Governor